

Balancing Waste Management with Economic Growth:

Joint Research Centre (JRC) helping new Member States tackle the environmental challenge

Waste management strategies vary tremendously within the enlarged European Union. Several new Member States and Candidate Countries continue to rely on uncontrolled waste dumps. This can have a detrimental impact on the environment and human health.

Faced with the challenge of balancing expected strong economic growth with environmental deterioration, new Member States are being supported by the JRC to integrate EU Directives into national laws. This will also avoid that old waste dumps are a burden for future development. At the same time, the JRC is helping these States to plan strategies to cope with the increasing pressures of waste and prosperity. This ranges from improving the use of controlled landfills and reducing harmful emissions from incinerators, to promoting the reuse and recycling of many types of wastes.

For example, the JRC's ***Institute of Environment and Sustainability*** (IES) organised a successful interactive workshop from 13 - 16 April in Prague. Entitled **"Integrated Waste Management & Life Cycle Assessment"**, this expert networking-event brought together 89 participants, including national delegates from new Member States and Accession Countries, to exchange experiences and compare needs for integrated waste management strategies. This included insights into life cycle assessments that help decision makers and other stakeholders to identify the environmental trade-offs that may occur at different stages in providing the public with goods and services.

National representatives had a unique opportunity to meet with internationally renowned experts in the domains of waste management and life cycle assessment. This included, amongst others, presenters from the ***United States Environmental Protection Agency***, the ***European Environment Agency***, ***OECD*** and ***UNEP***.

Portuguese Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. José Eduardo Martins, presented new Member State and Candidate Country delegates with an inspirational case-study on how Portugal has tackled waste management issues since joining the EU, moving Portugal towards a more sustainable waste management system.

Follow-up of the workshop will be carried out by the JRC's ***Institute for Environment and Sustainability***, including pilot studies for planning municipal waste management strategies that involve new Member States and Candidate Countries. These studies address the potential for improvements that can be achieved through current and potential future European policy and strategies.

Workshop presentations and further information are now available on:
<http://viso.ei.jrc.it/iwmlca/index.html>

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